

RECKLESS RALPH'S

DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP

A monthly magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation and literature of the old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers.

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RARE DIME NOVELS

by Edward T. LeBlanc

#1 INDIAN TALES

Published by the General Intelligence and Publishing Company,

63 Arcade, Providence, Rhode Island

The above series is probably one of the rarest in the Dime Novel field. It seems to have been published as a sideline to other business interests, as the publishers advertised the operating of an employment agency: "Female help of every nationality. American and Colored girls a specialty." They were also in the real estate and brokerage business and ran a patent exchange.

This series was started and probably terminated in 1874. It had a yellow pictorial cover, size 6½x9 inches with 20 pages. It sold for 15 cents. It is doubted whether it lasted more than two or three issues. In all probability its circulation was limited to the New England area, which would account in part for its rarity. The copy in my possession was found in Providence, Rhode Island, and in all my contacts with dime novel collectors, this is the only known copy. I would appreciate hearing from anyone who may possess a copy or who may have information about this series.

The first issue is entitled "The Forest Witch; or, The Terror of the Odjibwes" (spelled exactly that way) by Charles K. Melville. The proprietors of the General Intelligence and Publishing Company are given as Osborn and Melville, and it is suspected that Charles K. Melville is the same Melville. He is credited with being the



author of at least five other novels, none of which is familiar. This leads to the belief that other series were put out by the publishers. This would make an interesting research problem.

The story opens near St. Paul, Minnesota, then a settlement of some fifty log houses. A group of settlers are building their homes in the wilderness. Alice Justin and Harry Vernon are introduced and provide the romantic interest. Three weeks later a woodsman, Tiger Joe by name, overhears the Odjibwes planning to attack the little settlement. He warns them and goes for help. The Indians attack and overcome the settlers. Alice Justin is tak-

en prisoner and, in trying to rescue her, Harry Vernon stumbles into an unfinished well where he is overlooked in the ensuing slaughter.

Upon recovering from the fall, Harry is confronted with a horrible sight. All have been scalped. Tiger Joe arrives with a party of men. Alas! Too late. One of the grisly figures groans and sits up. It proves to be Mr. Justin. Alice's father (the author in a side note states that a scalped person has lived). He is told that his daughter has been captured and that everyone else except Harry has been killed. He cannot bring himself to believe that his wife is dead. In burying the bodies, it is found that one body is missing. One other person must be alive. Could it be Mrs. Justin? (The author does not explain why the bodies are not identified.)

Harry is in a hurry to pursue the Indians and rescue Alice, but Tiger Joe advises waiting. Her father bewails the fact that they are leaving her to a fate worse than death. They go to the nearest settlement and after waiting a short time, Tiger Joe decides the time for pursuit is right. He goes out alone saying that company would only be an encumbrance. A day or so later he comes upon an odd incident. Hearing Indians yelping nearby, he hides behind a tree. Soon two white persons hotly pursued by Indians make their appearance. They are not dressed as woodsmen and Tiger Joe cannot help wondering what they are doing there. A stranger sight however, takes his attention. Before the Odjibwes can overtake the white men, a horseman appears holding two torches and yelling deprecations at the Indians. "The forest witch," whispers Tiger Joe to himself. The Indians are in terror of her and flee before her. Soon they are out of sight.

Tiger Joe makes himself known to the two white men and together they prepare a meal of venison steak. Explanations are in order but before the white men can start they find themselves surrounded by Odjibwes. Tiger Joe backs up to a tree and tells his two companions to "Git," that he can take care of himself. After killing quite a few Indians, he is taken alive, much to the satisfaction of the Indians. He is taken to their village for torturing, a favorite Indian pastime.

In the meantime Alice has been taken to the Indian village where Wahwanda, chief of the Odjibwes says he will make her his squaw. Alice shrinks from him. He tells her that she has a day in which to make up her mind. In the meantime, she will have the freedom of the village. When Tiger Joe is brought into the village, Alice makes herself known and is told that her father and her lover are both alive. She is overjoyed. At this point the forest witch again makes an appearance, and in the confusion Tiger Joe and Alice escape.

After Tiger Joe had been taken prisoner, the two white men, Dennis O' Hara and Wallace (no surname is given) find a cave on the shore of Lake Pemedji. The Indian village is not too distant and they hear the commotion created by the forest witch and go out to investigate. Luckily Tiger Joe and Alice are headed in their direction. Wallace and Dennis bring them to the cave where they believe they are safe. Leaving Alice in the cave, they go out to scout around the Indian village which had been put to the torch by the forest witch.

Wahwanda, who has been smitten with Alice, watched her when she fled the village with Tiger Joe and he followed, seeing them enter the cave. He steals into the cave and carries Alice off making for the other side of the lake in a canoe.

Upon returning to the cave, Tiger Joe, Wallace, and Dennis are chagrined to find Alice gone. After determining by signs that she has been taken to the shore of the lake, they return to the cave for consultation. Nothing can be done right away.

Wallace tells his story. He ran away to sea some years before and after sailing the seven seas, he cast his lot with a sea captain who had some years before buried a treasure in Oregon on the Columbia river. The Captain set out from San Francisco to recover the treasure. The sea captain is killed in a skirmish with Modoc Indians, leaving the treasure to our two friends. The treasure is found but is too heavy to take along without conveyance. They had been on their way east for that purpose when Tiger Joe had first seen them.

tain, Wallace, and Dennis, a shipmate,

In the meantime, Alice is taken across the lake by the Odjibwes chief where he again asserts that he will make her his squaw. The forest witch appears and Wahwanda takes to his heels closely followed by her. Alice takes the canoe and paddles back to the cave. Our friends are overjoyed to see her.

The next day they leave for the settlements. Tiger Joe has a hideaway set up about a days travel away. There they make themselves comfortable to rest for the night. Dennis goes out to a nearby spring to get some water where he is pounced upon by Indians. He breaks through them and re-enters the hideout, the entrance of which is camouflaged by natural foliage. The Indians are baffled at his disappearance. One who blunders upon the entrance is shot. This gives the entrance away and the Indians swarm to the spot. As quickly as they come to the entrance they are shot down. However the position of the travelers is precarious. The Indians trample the ground and in so doing it is feared that they will force their way in. Dennis leaves at a run hoping the Indians will follow him, thus saving his friends. He is the only one the Indians have seen. He is captured a short distance away.

Wallace, Tiger Joe, and Alice after waiting a short time leave the hideout to reconnoiter. Immediately the two men are knocked out by the crafty Indians who have been lying in wait. Alice is again taken prisoner.

Bloody Jim, an Indian fighter and trapper, together with other frontiersmen from the settlement leave in search of Tiger Joe accompanied by Mr. Justin and Harry Vernon. They appear on the scene just as Wallace and Tiger Joe are recovering. The situation is quickly explained. The frontiersmen overtake the Indians and rescue Alice and Dennis.

In a cove by the lake, the forest witch has captured and bound Wahwanda to a stake piled high with dry brush. She sets it afire with fiendish glee. "Burn, ye murderer, as ye made others burn!" The frontiersmen happen upon the scene too late to avert the horror. Mr. Justin recognizes the forest witch as his wife.

Mrs. Justin had gone mad when she saw Alice captured and her husband

scalped, and in her madness had terrorized the Indians ever since. Seeing her husband and daughter alive failed to bring her to her senses. But upon setting eyes on Wallace she recognizes him as her son who had left home years before as indeed he is. She then recognizes her husband and daughter. All rejoice over the reunion of the family. Wallace is a little sorry that Alice turns out to be his sister as he had found himself falling in love with her. At this point Tiger Joe identifies himself as Joseph Vernon, brother of Harry. All return to the settlement where Harry and Alice are united in marriage.

A sequel, entitled "The Treasure Seekers; or, The Renegade of the Williamette" is scheduled to appear recording the adventures encountered in recovering the treasure from the banks of the Columbia River.

NEWSY NEWS

by Ralph F. Cummings

They're Out! What's Out—Why, Johannsen's two books on "The House of Beadle and Adams and its Dime and Nickel Novels." The Story of a Vanished Literature. Written by Prof. Albert Johannsen, with a foreword by John T. McIntyre. Beautiful, there's no name to it, for they are something out of the ordinary, something none of us ever dreamed of ever seeing, for when I received my copies, I couldn't believe my eyes, for it was the most pleasant surprise I've had in a long time. Never has anything like it ever appeared before, for it surely was worth all the time we've had, waiting for it to appear.

"As Jacob Blanck says in his page and a half article in the Antiquarian Bookman for May 27th that it is stupendous, it's colossal, it's terrific, and he has left us breathless, else we'd be doing nip-ups in print."

Not only do we praise Prof. Johannsen for this work, but also to the University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, Okla., for the wonderful job they did in bringing them out.

Brothers, get a set of these books, even if you have to mortgage the house to do it, you'll never be sorry. The set of two, boxed, size 8¼x11¼ inches, 952 pages, and plenty of illustrations, and in their original colors

too, price \$15.00. Can you beat it. After June 15th, they'll be \$20.00. Even at that price, you wouldn't be sorry.

And to think that Prof. Johannsen is one of our own Brotherhood members. Fellows, we should all feel very proud to have such a distinguished brother among us. We all DO appreciate him, I'm sure. In these two volumes he has identified and classified the several thousand stories, the hundreds of serials in weekly story papers, and the many hand books issued by Beadle & Adams. The 1st volume contains a history of the firm and bibliographical lists of its publications. All the many series and Libraries are described, listed and cross-indexed, from the first long run of Dime Novels to Sixpenny Biographies and One Cent Song Books.

The second volume provides biographical sketches of the authors and specimens of their writing styles. In addition there are indexes of "Titles and Sub-titles," "Localities and Characters" mentioned in the stories. "Pseudonyms," and other useful data, together with a list of "Newspaper and Magazine Articles," dealing with the subject.

Albert Johannsen has been for many years a distinguished member of the University of Chicago faculty in petrology, and is now a professor emeritus of that institution. This book is the result of some twenty years spent in assembling and recording the Beadle and Adams publications. Including in the two volumes are nearly three hundred illustrations—reproductions of cover designs and variants, many in their original colors, and many authors too. Ye editor will have some extra sets on hand, so if interested, get that surprise that you have been waiting for NOW! Brother Johannsen has put in a lot of work and worry into these two fine volumes, in order to give us something we've never had before.

Since I left the hospital, for the operation on hemorrhoids, I've felt pretty good, now I'm wondering? Are they coming back or what. Will have to go see what the doc says. Hope it's nothing to be worried about, and can be treated very easily.

Glen V. Tryon, 105 W. Shiawassee Ave., Fenton, Mich., H. H. B. mem-

ber No. 162, that was signed as a friend, has died some time this year, as I received a letter I sent him, marked deceased, so it must mean we've lost another member. God bless him always.

J. C. Dykes, 4511 Guilford Rd., College Park, Md., H. H. Bro. member No. 83, wants to buy, or if not for sale, would like the loan of such novels as follows. Any nos. of "Morrison's Sensational Series," "Wide A Wake Library" #451 and "Young Sleuth Library" #80. This is important, so be sure to drop Bro. Dykes a few lines, and tell him what you have.

Bob Frye, 895 Morgan Ave., Schenectady, N. Y., had an operation for prostrate glands, and his brother for ulcers, and George French is coming along very good after his operation. Bob Frye says he has a lot of novels for sale, so if anyone is interested, write to him.

Advertisers Attention! The closing date is the 27th of each month, so please get your ads in on or before that date. After that date, they will be held over until the next month.

Bart Hurley, one time member of H. H. Brotherhood, was killed when he fell into an opening of a basement in New York City, Nov. 20th, 1949.

THE LIFE OF W. CLARK RUSSELL

It does not happen often that Jacks Ashore brings with him to land the manuscript of a story, but that occurred in the year of 1867, when W. Clark Russell, a young sailor home from the sea, carried under his arm a novel that he had written in his hours of leisure.

He had not found it very difficult to spin the yarn, but now that he was amongst the land sharks, he did not know what to do with it, until he received the advice of a good friend, Dr. Fennell. What happened then has been so well told in W. Clark Russell's own words that he shall tell the story again. In those days, he wrote, a man long since dead, a lively, pleasant good hearted fellow named Dr. Edward Fennell, was a friend of his. He was introduced to Sampson Low. He had written a novel. He would not for thousands proclaim its name, but enough that he then thought it a masterpiece, and

based on a new idea in literature, namely a combination between the style and method of Jane Austin, and the style and method of Victor Hugo. He was little more than twenty-three, to which age, the experienced will forgive much. He gave his friend Fennell the manuscript to read, and eventually Sampson Low was advised to publish it. He was much astonished and delighted when one afternoon he received a letter from Sampson Low, stating they were willing to publish the novel, and offering 25 pounds for it. He lost no time in calling at Ludgate Hill (where the firm was housed then.) He asked for a member of the firm, and he was conducted, if he can clearly recollect, to a small office in the centre of the building. Here was a gentleman to receive him. He understood that he was Mr. Edward Marston, partner in the firm of Sampson Low.

After commenting on his book in a very kindly manner he said, "Twenty-five pounds is not much to offer for a three volume novel." Clark smiled and answered, "It is not," but without emphasis. But, said he, with an arched look, we can do without it. He gazed about Clark, at the clerks, the richly lined bookshelves, the countless illustrations of a flourishing business, and thought to himself, perhaps he might not be able to do without it.

But he held his peace on that score, for he should have been very much humbled and mortified had Mr. Marston, understanding that he agreed with him, handed him back the manuscript.

"If ever an author has reason to speak well of his publisher, he is the man. From the beginning Mr. Marston honoured me by exhibiting confidence in my work. He took everything I sent him, much of which failed to meet with the same old encouraging note."

Clark was delighted with the success of "The Wreck of the Grosvenor" quite as much for my dear old friends sake as for my own. He again and again extended his hand, when most publishers, as we now understand them, would have turned their backs on him. Clark Russell's first book was not a success, and yet it cannot be said to have failed. When years had passed, and he had gained greater and greater mastery as an author, he

was rather ashamed of his earliest novel. He would never mention its title, and he implored his publishers not to print it. Therefore, they will respect his wishes, and say no more about his once cherished first story, though he once loved it himself as a woman loves her first born. Hard work and his knowledge of the sea brought success to W. Clark Russell at last, and particularly in the year 1877, when "The Wreck of the Grosvenor," was issued. This tale of sailor life was read with delight all through the land, so that the author found that he was now a famous man. Sir Edwin Arnold named him "the prose homer of the great ocean," and the poet Swinburne, passionately fond of the sea, a writer who loved and hated with great intensity, and who uttered his thoughts fearlessly, wrote of W. Clark Russell that, he is the greatest master of the sea, living or dead, and his name is a household word wherever the English language is spoken and the splendid qualities of the British sailor known and understood.

W. Clark Russell was born in New York in the year of 1844, but he was educated in a private school in Winchester, and afterwards, he attended a school at Boulogne. When he was 13 years of age, he became a sailor, and remained in the British Merchant Service until he was 21. For some years now he wrote for the newspapers, and especially for the Newcastle Daily Chronicle, and the London Daily Telegraph, compiling many articles that exposed the injustice and the harsh treatment of sailors that prevailed in the Merchant Service. But as he grew more and more successful with his stories, he ceased to write for the newspapers. His work, however, was hindered very much by bad health, and in one of his letters he mentions a disease which has been with him since 1881, keeping him in bed for months, rendering him silent and hopeless with pain, and withdrawing him from the communion of many to whom it would have been his pleasure and pride to be personally known.

It has been said that much of the work of the world is accomplished by invalids, and many of W. Clark Russell's books have been written by a man who suffered years of pain, who had to struggle along on crutches, or

to subside into a bath chair. Notwithstanding all these afflictions, however, he did not whine about his lot, kept his mind fresh, vigorous and buoyant, and had the satisfaction of knowing, like many another confirmed invalid, that he had achieved more than many who have gone through life with movements unrestricted and with health unimpaired.

One of W. Clark Russell's latest volumes was a collection of verses entitled "The Father of the Sea," and other Legends of the Deep. One of these, Marooned, is particularly weird, as the following, its conclusion, shows "That ocean gem's his ocean grave His Ghosts are with him night and day In nightmares shall the spectres rave They'll gibber watching him decay. They'll act again, their purple part With teeth of fire they'll chew his heart

He'll flee them on the Coral sand They'll fly with him on either hand. He'll seek the cloisters of the brake And find them waiting, wide awake They'll chase him to the dizzy steep But the heroic murderer durst not leap They'll shriek with laughter when he groans

And chew his heart and pick his bones In thunder, gale and bellowing sea, he'll hear the spirits of the past In peace or storm each goblin plays the hideous part for which he's cast

His skeleton by sailors found shall never make his story known How frightful was that beauteous isle, how horrible his life alone."

One of his most remarkable stories is "The Frozen Pirate," and in the Saturday Review, in its notice of this work, said, "All who love stories of the marvelous quests after buried treasure, and sea yarns so good that one wishes them to go on forever, will be grateful for W. Clark Russell's thrilling story, "The Frozen Pirate." This is one of the books reading does not stale."

W. Clark Russell died at Bath, England in the year of 1911, when he was 67 years of age, so that he did not live to read of the achievements of our sailors in the Great War of 1914-1918.

Girls and boys will not remember the time, but men and women now growing old will recall the days when

their fathers used to sing the songs of the sea composed by W. Clark Russell's father, Henry Russell, who gave us "Cheer, Boys, Cheer," "There's a Good Time Coming," "A Life on the Ocean Wave," "The Ship on Fire," and many another popular ditty, indeed, more than 800. The father was born in 1813 and did not die until 1900, so that he had been dead only eleven years when his son died. Some of the works of W. Clark Russell are "John Holdsworth, Chief Mate," "The Wreck of the Grosvenor," "An Ocean Free Lance," "The Lady Maud," "Jacks Courtship," "A Strange Voyage," "The Frozen Pirate," "A Sea Queen," "Little Loo," "My Watch Below," "The Emigrant Ship," "A Sailor's Sweetheart," "Betwixt the Forelands," "Mrs. Dines Jewells," "The Two Captains," "Father of the Sea," "The Turnpike Sailor." He wrote also a short life of Nelson and another of Collingwood. Moreover, he contributed a preface to Sampson Low's edition of Little Life on the Ocean. His works are being collected now by various collectors.

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